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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9018

INFO RUEHXX/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE

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RUEHGB/AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD IMMEDIATE 0702

RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE 0960

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SUBJECT: READOUT OF ABDULLAH-MUBARAK MEETING BY EGYPTIAN
DCM IN RIYADH

REF: RIYADH 1245

Classified By: Charge' d'Affaires Michael Gfoeller
for reasons 1.4 (b), (c) and (d)

¶1. (S) SUMMARY. Riyadh Egyptian DCM Hussam Essa provided a readout of the Saudi King Abdullah-Egyptian President Mubarak meeting held in Cairo on Aug. 15. Essa again relayed the message that Egypt asks to have side discussions on Iran during the next 6 2 1 meetings, as well being kept informed and consulted of any P5 1 discussions vis-a-vis Iran. The main topics at the Cairo summit were: threats of Iranian expansionism; deteriorating situation in Gaza; fragility of the Lebanese government; and likely improved relations with Iraq, but no naming yet of an Ambassador. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (S) In a follow up meeting on August 18 with Riyadh Egyptian DCM Hussam Essa, Essa provided to Pol Counselor a readout of the Saudi King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz-Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak summit held in Cairo on Aug. 15 (Reftel). The main topics followed what had been previously provided to us: threats of Iranian expansionism; deteriorating situation in Gaza; fragility of the Lebanese government; and likely improved relations with Iraq through some political exchanges. Essa did not/not have any information regarding Omani Sultan Qaboos' participation in the Cairo summit nor on the reported Omani invitation to Iran to have observer status in Peninsula Shield.

¶3. (S) Essa again asked Pol Counselor for a readout on the July meeting between President Bush and Saudi Foreign Minister Saud al-Faisal in Washington. He also asked about any upcoming high-level USG visits to Saudi Arabia, as well as the status of the several bilateral agreements that were signed by the USG and SAG during the May POTUS visit. Pol Counselor remained noncommittal in response.

IRAN

14. (S) Essa confirmed that the threats posed by Iranian expansionism and its quest for nuclear technology was at the forefront of the these two leaders' discussions. He also repeated the Government of Egypt's (GOE) request that Iran become a topic for the 6 2 1 discussions along with Iraq, and for Egypt to be kept informed of any P5 1 meeting results. Although he acknowledged that given the USG's and EU's reaction to Russia's invasion of Georgia, the P5 1 will probably not be fruitful as Russia will likely be automatically recalcitrant to any USG or European proposal on any subject, including Iran. Still, Essa emphasized that "Iran must be shown that we (including Egypt) are opposed to their policies."

PALESTINIANS/GAZA

15. (S) Essa bemoaned the "chaotic" Palestinian situation and their poor financial status, conveying the GOE's alarm over Gaza. He stated it was Hamas's intransigence and violently destabilizing activities that were the sole cause of Gaza's problems, not the Israelis. Pres. Mubarak was assured by King Abdullah that the Saudis would continue to support Abu Mazen and Fatah, including donating additional assistance funds. During the discussion, Essa referred to Hamas "as an enemy to the Palestinian people." He also mentioned that

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"Hamas is crazy" in reference to Hamas's criticism of Israel after the Israelis had agreed to release 200 Palestinian prisoners.

16. (S) Essa mentioned that Pres. Mubarak commended King Abdullah for all the financial aid the SAG had provided to the Palestinians, exceeding Saudi Arabia's pledged donations. Additionally, he noted that the GOE was demarching all the other Arab governments for them to meet their own financial pledges to the Palestinians, lamenting that most were well behind in meeting their obligations.

LEBANON

17. (S) Turning to Lebanon, Essa advised that both King Abdullah and Pres. Mubarak remain highly concerned about the instability there. He added that Egypt will continue to fully support the Lebanese government as they considered it staying in power was the only way to counter "Iranian-backed Hizbollah" and to prevent another civil war there.

IRAQ

18. (S) Essa conveyed the summit's consensus that conditions in Iraq had greatly improved. Part of this success was attributed to Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri Al-Maliki "finally fighting the Shia militia." This was viewed as a positive sign for the Government of Iraq. Essa continued this would lead to "good gestures" towards Iraq by Saudi Arabia. To which he explained this meant exchanges of senior level delegations, and perhaps eventually donation of assistance funds to Iraq. However, appointment of either a Saudi or Egyptian Ambassador was unlikely in the near term due to security concerns. He noted that "political reasons with Maliki" were now no longer a cause to delay Ambassadorial appointments, which he ascribed to both Egypt's and Saudi Arabia's improved opinion of Iraq. He opined once security was more firmly established, Ambassadors would eventually be named.

19. (S) COMMENT. The Egyptian DCM's readout matched what he had told us before for the expected Abdullah-Mubarak summit agenda. He repeated the combined Saudi-Egyptian concern over Iran's activities, adding he truly hoped Egypt would be included in any future multilateral discussions over Iran. Essa also re-affirmed both governments' commitments to Lebanon and the Palestinian territories, ascribing the "culprits" to these problems being Hizbollah and Hamas, respectively. The Saudi-Egyptian consensus on improvements in Iraq is a positive sign that they will begin offering more support to Iraq, even if the naming of an Ambassador is not in the near future. END COMMENT.
GFOELLER